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from the Author

A

DISCOURSE, &c.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED TO THE

STUDENTS

OF THE

ROYAL ACADEMY

ON THE

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BY THE

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BRITISH MUSEUM

DISCOURSE, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

TO diſcover beauties, or to point out faults, in the works of celebrated Maſters, and to compare the conduct of one Artiſt with another, is certainly no mean or inconſiderable part of criticiſm; but this is ſtill no more than to know the art through the Artiſt. This teſt of inveſtigation muſt have two capital defects, it muſt be narrow, and it muſt be uncertain. To enlarge the boundaries of the Art of Painting, as well as to fix its principles, it will be neceſſary, that, *that* art, and *thoſe* principles ſhould be conſidered in their correſpondence with the principles of the other arts, which like this, addreſs themſelves primarily and principally to the imagination. When thoſe connected, and kindred principles are brought together to be compared, another compariſon will grow out of this, that is, the compariſon of them all, with thoſe of human nature, from whence arts

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derive their materials, upon which they are to produce their effects.

When this compariſon of art with art, and of all arts, with the nature of man, is once made with ſucceſs, our guiding lines are as well aſcertained and eſtabliſhed, as they can be in matters of this deſcription.

This, as it is the higheſt ſtile of criticiſm, is at the ſame time the ſoundeſt; as it refers to the eternal and immutable nature of things.

You are not to imagine that I mean to open to you at large, or to recommend to your reſearch the whole of this vaſt field of Science. It is certainly much above my faculties to reach it; and though it may not be above yours, to comprehend it fully, if it were fully and properly brought before you, yet, perhaps the moſt perfect criticiſm requires habits of ſpeculation and abſtraction, not ſo conſiſtent with the employment which ought to occupy, and the habits of mind which ought to prevail in a practical Artiſt. I only point out to you theſe things, that when you do criticiſe, (as all who work on a plan, will criticiſe more or leſs) it may be done on the foundation of true principles; and that though you may not always travel

travel a great way, the way that you do travel, may be in the right road.

I obſerve, as a fundamental ground, common to all the Arts with which we have any thing to do in this diſcourſe, that they addreſs themſelves only to two faculties of the mind, its imagination and its ſenſibility.

All Theories which attempt to direct, or to controll the Art, upon any principles falſely called rational, which we form to ourſelves upon a ſuppoſition of what ought in reaſon to be the object or means of Art, independent of their known firſt effect on the imagination, muſt be falſe and deluſive. For though it may appear bold to ſay it, the imagination is here the reſidence of truth. If the imagination is affected, the concluſion is fairly drawn. If it be not affected, the reaſoning is erroneous, becauſe the end is not obtained; the effect itſelf being the teſt, and the only teſt of the truth and efficacy of the means.

There is in the commerce of life, as in Art, a ſagacity which is far from being contradictory to *right* reaſon, and is ſuperior to any occaſional exerciſe of that faculty, which ſuperſedes it; does not wait for the ſlow progreſs of deduction, but goes at once, by what appears a kind

a kind of intuition, to the concluſion. A man endowed with this faculty, feels and acknowledges the truth, though it is not always in his power, perhaps, to give a reaſon for it; becauſe he cannot recollect and bring preſent before him all the materials that gave birth to his opinion; for very many and very intricate conſiderations, may unite to form the principle, even of ſmall and minute parts, involved in, or dependent on, a great ſyſtem of things: but the right impreſſion ſtill remains fixed in his mind.

THIS impreſſion, is the reſult of the accumulated experience of our whole life, and has been collected we do not always know how, or when. But this maſs of collective obſervation, however acquired, ought to prevail over that reaſon, which however powerfully exerted on any particular occaſion, will probably comprehend but a partial view of the ſubject; and our conduct in life as well as in the Arts, is, or ought to be, generally governed by this habitual reaſon, and it is our happineſs we are enabled to draw on ſuch funds. If we were obliged to enter into a theoretical deliberation on every occaſion, before we act, life would be at a ſtand, and Art would be impracticable.

It appears to me therefore, that our firſt thoughts, that is, the effect which any thing produces on our minds on its firſt appearance, is never to be forgot; and it demands for that reaſon, becauſe it is the firſt, to be laid up with care. If this be not done, the Artiſt may happen to impoſe on himſelf by partial reaſoning, by a cold conſideration of thoſe animated firſt thoughts which proceeded, not perhaps from caprice or raſhneſs (as he may afterwards conceit) but from the fullneſs of his mind, enriched with all the copious ſtores of various inventions that he had ever ſeen, or had ever paſſed in his thoughts. Theſe ideas are infuſed into his deſign, without any conſcious effort; but, if he be not on his guard, he may reconſider and correct them, till the whole matter is reduced to a common-place invention.

This is ſometimes the effect of what I mean to caution you againſt; that is to ſay, an unfounded diſtruſt of the imagination and feeling, in favour of narrow, partial, confined, argumentative Theories, and of principles that ſeem to apply to the deſign in hand, without conſidering thoſe general impreſſions on the fancy in which real principles of *ſound reaſon*, and of much more weight and importance, are involved, and, as it were, lye hid, under the appearance of a ſort of vulgar ſentiment.

Reason, without doubt, muſt ultimately determine every thing; at this minute it is required to inform us when that very reaſon is to give way to feeling.

Though I have often ſpoke of that mean conception of our art which confines it to mere imitation, I muſt add, that it may be narrowed to ſuch a mere matter of experiment, as to exclude from it the application of ſcience, which alone gives dignity and compaſs to any art. But to find proper foundations for Science, is neither to narrow or to vulgariſe it; and this is ſufficiently exemplified in the ſucceſs of experimental Philoſophy. It is the falſe ſyſtem of reaſoning, grounded on a partial view of things, againſt which I would moſt cordially guard you. And I do it the rather, becauſe thoſe narrow Theories, ſo coincident with the pooreſt and moſt miſerable practice, and which are adopted to give it countenance, have *not* had their origin in the pooreſt minds, but in the miſtakes, or poſſibly in the miſtaken interpretations of great and commanding authorities. We are not therefore in this caſe miſled by feelings, but by falſe ſpeculation.

When ſuch a man as Plato ſpeaks of Painting as only an imitative art, and that our pleaſure proceeds from obſerving

ſerving and acknowledging the truth of the imitation, I think he miſleads us by a partial Theory. It is in this poor, partial, and ſo far, falſe view of the art, that Cardinal Bembo has choſen to diſtinguiſh even Raphael himſelf, whom our adulation honours with the name of Divine.

The ſame ſentiment is adopted by Pope in his Epitaph on Sir Godfrey Kneller, and he turns the Panegyrick ſolely on imitation, as it is a ſort of deception.

I SHALL not think my time miſemployed, if by any means I may contribute to confirm your opinion of what ought to be the object of your purſuit; becauſe, though the beſt critics muſt always have exploded this ſtrange Idea, yet I know that there is a diſpoſition towards a perpetual recurrence to it, on account of its ſimplicity and ſuperficial plauſibility.

FOR which reaſon I ſhall beg leave to lay before you a few thoughts on this ſubject; to throw out ſome hints that may lead your minds to an opinion, (which I take to be the truth) that Painting is not only, not to be conſidered as an imitation, operating by deception, but that

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it is, and ought to be in many points of view, and ſtrictly ſpeaking, no imitation at all of external nature.

Perhaps it ought to be as far removed from the vulgar Idea of Imitation, as the refined civilized ſtate in which we live, is removed from a groſs ſtate of nature; and thoſe who have not cultivated their imagination, which the majority of mankind certainly have not, may be ſaid, (in regard to arts) to continue in this ſtate of nature. Such men will always prefer imitation, to that excellence which is addreſſed to another faculty that they do not poſſeſs; but theſe are not the perſons to whom a Painter is to look, any more than a judge of morals and manners, ought to refer controverted points upon thoſe ſubjects, to the opinions of people taken from the banks of the Ohio, or from New Holland.

It is the loweſt ſtile only of arts, whether of Painting, Poetry, or Muſic, that may be ſaid, in the vulgar ſenſe, to be naturally pleaſing.

The higher efforts of thoſe arts, we know by experience do not affect minds wholly uncultivated. This refined taſte is the conſequence of education and habit; we

are born only with a capacity of entertaining this refinement, as we are born with a diſpoſition to receive and obey all the rules and regulations of ſociety; and ſo far it may be ſaid to be natural to us, and no farther.

What has been ſaid, may ſhew the Artiſt how neceſſary it is, when he looks about him for the advice and criticiſm of his friends, to make ſome diſtinction of the character, taſte, experience, and obſervation in this Art, of thoſe, from whom it is received.

An ignorant uneducated man may, like Apelles's critic, be a competent judge of the truth of the repreſentation of a ſandal; or to go ſomewhat higher, like Moliere's old woman, may decide upon what is nature, in regard to comic humour: but a Critic in the higher ſtile of Art, requires the ſame refined taſte, as that which directed the Artiſt in his work.

And to illuſtrate this principle by a parallel from other Arts, I ſhall now produce ſome inſtances to ſhew that they, as well as our own Art, renounce the narrow idea of nature, and the narrow theories derived from that miſtaken principle, and apply to that reaſon only which in-

forms us, not what imitation is, a natural repreſentation of a given object, but what it is natural for the imagination to be delighted with. And perhaps there is no better way of getting at this knowledge, than by this kind of analogy: Each art will corroborate and mutually reflect the truth on the other. Such a kind of juxta-poſition may likewiſe have this uſe, that whilſt the Artiſt is amuſing himſelf in the contemplation of other Arts, he may habitually transfer the principles of thoſe Arts to that which he profeſſes, which ought to be always preſent to his mind, and to which every thing is to be referred.

So far is Art from being derived from, or having any immediate intercourſe with particular nature as its model, that there are many Arts that ſet out with a profeſſed deviation from it.

This is certainly not ſo exactly true in regard to Painting and Sculpture. Our elements are laid in groſs common nature, an exact imitation of what is before us. But when we advance to the higher ſtate, we conſider this power of imitation, though firſt in the order of acquiſition, as by no means the higheſt in the ſcale of perfection.

Poetry addreſſes itſelf to the ſame faculties and the ſame diſpoſitions as Painting, though by different means. The object of both is to accommodate itſelf to all the natural propenſities and inclinations of the mind.

The very exiſtence of Poetry depends on the licence it aſſumes of deviating from actual nature, in order to gratify natural propenſities by other means, which are found by experience full as capable of affording ſuch gratification. It ſets out with a language to the higheſt degree artificial, a conſtruction of meaſured words, ſuch as never is, nor ever was uſed by man. Let this meaſure be what it will, whether hexameter or any other metre uſed in Latin or Greek, or Rhyme, or Blank Verſe varied with pauſes and accents, in modern languages, they are all equally removed from nature, and equally a violation of common ſpeech. When this artificial mode has been eſtabliſhed as the vehicle of ſentiment, there is another principle in the human mind, to which the work muſt be referred, which ſtill renders it more artificial, carries it ſtill further from common nature, and deviates only to render it more perfect. That principle is the ſenſe of congruity, coherence, and conſiſtency, which is a real exiſting

iſting principle in man; and it muſt be gratified. Therefore having once adopted a ſtile and a meaſure not found in common diſcourſe, it is required that the ſentiments muſt themſelves be, in the ſame proportion, elevated above common nature, from the neceſſity of there being an agreement of the parts among themſelves, that one uniform whole may be produced.

To correſpond therefore with this general ſyſtem of deviation from nature, the manner in which Poetry is offered to the ear, the tone in which it is recited, ſhould be as far removed from the tone of converſation, as the words of which that Poetry is compoſed.

This naturally ſuggeſts the idea of modulating the voice by art, which I ſuppoſe may be conſidered as accompliſhed to the higheſt degree of excellence in the recitative of the Opera, as we may conjecture it was in the chorus that attended the antient drama.

And, though the moſt violent paſſions, the higheſt diſtreſs, even death itſelf, is expreſſed in ſinging or recitative, I would not admit as ſound criticiſm the condem-

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nation of ſuch exhibitions on account of their being unnatural.

If it is natural for our ſenſes, and our imagination, to be delighted with ſinging, with inſtrumental muſic, with poetry, and with graceful action taken ſeparately, (none of them being in the vulgar ſenſe natural, even in that ſeparate ſtate,) it is conformable to experience, and therefore agreeable to reaſon, as connected with, and referred to experience, that we ſhould alſo be delighted with this union of muſic, poetry, and graceful action, joined to every circumſtance of pomp and magnificence calculated to ſtrike the ſenſes of the ſpectator.

Shall reaſon ſtand in the way and tell us, we ought not to like what we know we do like, and prevent us from feeling the full effect of this complicated exertion of art? This is what I would underſtand by poets and painters being allowed to dare every thing; for what can be more daring, than accompliſhing the purpoſe and end of art, by a complication of means, none of which have their archetypes in actual nature.

So far therefore is ſervile imitation from being neceſſary. Whatever is familiar, or in any way reminds us of what we ſee and hear every day, perhaps, does not belong to the higher provinces of art, either in poetry or painting.

The mind is to be tranſported, as Shakſpeare expreſſes it, *beyond the ignorant preſent*, to ages paſt. Another, and a higher order of beings is ſuppoſed, and to thoſe beings, every thing which is introduced into the work muſt correſpond. Of this conduct, under theſe circumſtances, the Roman and Florentine ſchools afford ſufficient examples. Their ſtyle by this means is raiſed and elevated above all others, and, by the ſame means, the compaſs of art itſelf is enlarged.

We often ſee grave and great ſubjects attempted by artiſts of another ſchool; who, though excellent in the lower claſs of art, proceeding on the ſame principles, and not recollecting, or not knowing, that they were to addreſs themſelves to another faculty of the mind, have become perfectly ridiculous.

The picture which I have at preſent in my thoughts, is, a ſacrifice of Iphigenia, painted by Jean Steen, a painter whom

whom I have formerly had occaſion to ſpeak of with the higheſt approbation; and even in this picture, the ſubject of which is by no means adapted to his genius, there is nature and expreſſion; but it is ſuch expreſſion, and the countenances are ſo familiar, and conſequently ſo vulgar, and the whole accompanied with ſuch finery of ſilks and velvet, that one would be almoſt tempted to doubt, whether the artiſt did not purpoſely intend to burleſque his ſubject.

Instances of the ſame kind we frequently ſee in poetry. Parts of Hobbes's tranſlation of Homer are remembered and repeated merely for the familiarity and meanneſs of their phraſeology, ſo ill correſponding to the ideas which ought to have been expreſſed, and, as I conceive, to the ſtyle of the original.

We may proceed in the ſame manner through the comparatively inferior branches of art. There are in works of that claſs, the ſame diſtinction of a higher and a lower ſtyle; and they take their rank and degree in proportion as they depart, more, or leſs, from common nature, and make it an object of their attention to ſtrike the imagination of the ſpectator by ways belonging ſpecially

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to art, unobſerved, untaught, out of the ſchools of its practice.

If our judgment is to be directed by the narrow, vulgar, untaught or rather ill-taught reaſon, we muſt prefer a portrait by Denner, or any high finiſher, to thoſe of Titian or Vandyke; and a landſkip of Vanderhyde, to thoſe of Titian or Rubens; for they are certainly a more exact repreſentation of nature.

If we ſuppoſe a view of nature repreſented with all the truth of the *camera obſcura*, and the ſame ſcene repreſented by a great Artiſt, how little and mean will the one appear in compariſon of the other, where no ſuperiority is ſuppoſed from the choice of the ſubjects. The ſcene ſhall be the ſame, the difference only will be in the manner in which it is preſented to the eye. With what additional ſuperiority then will the ſame Artiſt appear when he has the power of ſelecting his materials as well as elevating his ſtile.

Like Nicolas Pouſſin, he tranſports us to the environs of antient Rome, with all the objects which a literary education makes ſo precious and intereſting to man: or like

like Sebaſtian Bourdon, when he leads us to the dark antiquity of the Pyramids of Egypt; or, like Claude Lorrain, when he conducts us to the tranquility of Arcadian ſcenes, and fairy land.

Like the hiſtory Painter, a painter of landſkips in this ſtile and with this conduct, ſends the imagination back into antiquity; and, like the Poet, he makes the elements ſympathiſe with his ſubject: Whether the clouds roll in volumes like thoſe of Titian or Salvator Roſa, or like Claude, are gilded with the ſetting ſun; whether the mountains have ſudden and bold projections, or are gently ſloped; whether the branches of his trees ſhoot out abruptly in right angles from their trunk, or follow each other with only a gentle inclination.

All theſe circumſtances contribute to the general character of the work, whether it be of the elegant, or of the more ſublime kind.

If we add to this, the powerful materials of lightneſs and darkneſs, over which the Artiſt has complete dominion, to vary and diſpoſe them as he pleaſes, to diminiſh, or in-

creaſe them as will beſt ſuit his purpoſe, and correſpond to the general idea of his work.

A landſkip thus conducted, under the influence of a Poetical mind, will have the ſame ſuperiority over the more ordinary and common views, as Milton's *Allegro* and *Penſeroſo* have over a cold proſaic narration or deſcription; and ſuch a Picture would make a more forcible impreſſion on the mind than the real ſcenes, were they preſented before us.

If we look abroad to other Arts, we may obſerve the ſame diſtinction, the ſame diviſion into two claſſes, each of them acting under the influence of two different principles, in which the one follows nature, the other varies it, and ſometimes departs from it.

The Theatre, which is ſaid *to hold the mirror up to nature*, comprehends both thoſe Ideas.

The lower kind of Comedy, or Farce, like the inferior ſtyle of Painting, the more naturally it is repreſented, the better; but the higher, appears to me to aim no more at imitation,

imitation, ſo far as it belongs to any thing like deception; or have any expectation that the ſpectators ſhould think the events there repreſented, are really paſſing before them, than Raffaelle in his Cartoons, or Pouſſin in his Sacraments, expected you were to believe, even for a moment, that what they exhibited were real figures.

For want of this diſtinction, the world is filled with falſe criticiſm. Raffaelle is praiſed for naturalneſs and deception, which he certainly has not accompliſhed, and as certainly never intended; and our late great actor, Garrick, has been as ignorantly praiſed by his friend Fielding; who doubtleſs imagined he had hit upon an ingenious device, by introducing in one of his Novels, (otherwiſe a work of the higheſt merit,) an ignorant man, miſtaking Garrick's repreſentation of a ſcene in Hamlet, for reality.

A very little reflection will convince us, that there is not one circumſtance in the whole ſcene that is of the nature of deception. The merit and excellence of Shakeſpear, and of Garrick, when they were engaged in ſuch ſcenes, is of a different and much higher kind.

But what adds to the falſity of this intended compliment, is, that the beſt ſtage repreſentation, appears even more unnatural to a perſon of ſuch a character, who is ſuppoſed never to have ſeen a play before, than it does to thoſe who have had a habit of allowing for thoſe neceſſary deviations from nature which the Art requires.

In Theatric repreſentation, great allowances muſt be made for the place in which the exhibition is repreſented; for the ſurrounding company, the lighted candles, for the ſcenes viſibly ſhifted in your ſight; and for the language of blank verſe, which changes the common Engliſh, and which Engliſh itſelf muſt appear ſurpriſing in Hamlet, and all the court and natives of Demark.

These allowances are made, but their being made, puts an end to all manner of deception; and farther, we know that the more low, illiterate, and vulgar any perſon is, the leſs he will be diſpoſed to make theſe allowances, and of courſe to be deceived by any imitation; the things in which the treſpaſs againſt nature and common probability is made in favour of the Theatre, being quite within the ſphere of ſuch uninformed men.

THOUGH I have no intention of entering into all the circumſtances of unnaturalneſs in Theatrical repreſentations, I muſt obſerve, that even the expreſſion of violent paſſion, will not be always the moſt excellent in proportion as it is the moſt natural, ſo great terror and diſagreeable ſenſations may be communicated to the audience, that the balance would be deſtroyed by which pleaſure is preſerved, and holds its predominancy in the mind: violent diſtortion of action, harſh ſcreamings of the voice, however great the occaſion, or however natural on ſuch occaſion, are therefore not admiſſible in the Theatric Art. Many of theſe allowed deviations from nature ariſe from the neceſſity which there is, that every thing ſhould be raiſed and enlarged beyond its natural ſtate, that the full effect may come home to the ſpectator, which otherwiſe would be loſt in the comparatively extenſive ſpace of the Theatre. Hence the deliberate and ſtately ſtep, the ſtudied grace of action which ſeems to enlarge the dimenſions of the Actor, and alone to fill the ſtage. All this unnaturalneſs, ridiculous and affected as it would appear in a private room, is right and proper in its place.

AND here I muſt obſerve, and I believe it may be conſidered as a general rule, that no Art can be engrafted with

ſucceſs on another art. For though they all profeſs the ſame origin, and to proceed from the ſame ſtock, yet each has its own peculiar modes both of imitating nature, and of deviating from it, each for the accompliſhment of its own particular purpoſe. Theſe deviations, more eſpecially, will not bear tranſplantation to another ſoil.

If a Painter ſhould endeavour to copy the Theatrical pomp and parade of dreſs and attitude, inſtead of that ſimplicity, which is not a greater beauty in life, than it is in Painting, we ſhould condemn ſuch Pictures as painted in the meaneſt ſtile.

So alſo Gardening, as far as Gardening is an Art, or entitled to that appellation, is a deviation from nature; for if the true taſte conſiſts, as many hold, in baniſhing every appearance of Art, or any traces of the footſteps of man, it would then be no longer a Garden.

Even though we define it, "Nature to advantage dreſs'd," and in ſome ſenſe it is ſuch, and much more beautiful and commodious for the recreation of man; it is however, when ſo dreſs'd, no longer a ſubject for the pencil of a Landſkip Painter, as all Landſkip Painters know,

know, who love to have recourſe to Nature herſelf, and to dreſs her according to the principles of his own Art, which are far different from thoſe of Gardening, even when conducted according to the moſt approved principles, and ſuch as a Landſkip Painter himſelf would adopt in the diſpoſition of his own grounds, for his own private ſatisfaction.

I have brought together as many inſtances as appear neceſſary, to make out the ſeveral points which I wiſhed to ſuggeſt to your conſideration in this Diſcourſe; that your own thoughts may lead you farther in the uſe that may be made of the analogy of the Arts, and of the reſtraint which a full underſtanding of the diverſity of many of their principles ought to impoſe, on the employment of that analogy.

The great end of all thoſe arts, is, to make an impreſſion on the imagination and the feeling. The imitation of nature frequently does this. Sometimes it fails, and ſomething elſe ſucceeds. I think therefore the true teſt of all the arts, is not ſolely what is a true copy of nature, but whether it anſwers the end of art, which is to produce a pleaſing effect upon the mind.

It remains only to ſpeak a few words of Architecture, which does not come under the denomination of an imitative art. It applies itſelf, like Muſic (and I believe we may add Poetry) directly to the imagination, without the intervention of any kind of imitation.

There is in Architecture, as in Painting, an inferior branch of art, in which the imagination appears to have no concern. It does not however acquire the name of a polite and liberal art, from its uſefulneſs, or adminiſtering to our wants or neceſſities; but, from ſome higher principle, we are ſure in the hands of a man of genius it is capable of inſpiring ſentiment, and of filling the mind with great and ſublime ideas.

It may be worth the attention of Artiſts, to conſider what materials are in their hands, that may contribute to this end; and whether this art has it not in its power to addreſs itſelf to the imagination with effect, by more ways than are generally employed by Architects.

To paſs over the effect that is produced by that general ſymmetry and proportion, by which, the eye is delighted as the ear is with Muſic, Architecture certainly

tainly poſſeſſes many principles in common with Poetry and Painting.

Amongst thoſe which may be reckoned as the firſt, is, that of affecting the imagination by means of aſſociation of ideas. Thus, for inſtance, as we have naturally a veneration for antiquity, whatever building brings to our remembrance antient cuſtoms and manners, ſuch as the Caſtles of the Barons of antient Chivalry, is ſure to give this delight. Hence it is that *Towers and battlements* * are ſo often ſelected by the Painter and the Poet, to make a part of the compoſition of their ideal Landſkip; and it is from hence in a great degree, that in buildings of Vanbrugh, who was a Poet as well as an Architect, there is a greater diſplay of imagination, than we ſhall find perhaps in any other; and this is the ground of the effect which we feel in many of his works, notwithſtanding the faults with which many of them are juſtly charged. For this purpoſe, Vanbrugh appears to have had recourſe to ſome principles of the Gothic Architecture; which, though not ſo antient as the Grecian, is more ſo to our ima-

* Towers and Battlements it ſees
Boſom'd high in tufted trees. Milton L'Allegro.

gination, with which the Artiſt is more concerned than with abſolute truth.

The Barbaric ſplendor of thoſe Aſiatic Buildings, which are now publiſhing by a member of this Academy *, may poſſibly, in the ſame manner, furniſh an Architect, not with models to copy, but with hints of compoſition and general effect which would not otherwiſe have occurred.

It is, I know, a delicate and hazardous thing, (and as ſuch I have already pointed it out) to carry the principles of one art to another, or even to reconcile in one object, the various modes of the ſame Art, when they proceed on different principles. The ſound rules of the Grecian Architecture are not to be lightly ſacrificed. A deviation from them, or even an addition to them, is like a deviation, or addition to, or from the Rules of other Arts, fit only for a great mind, which is thoroughly converſant in the nature of man, as well as a complete maſter of all combinations in his own Art.

It may not be amiſs for the Architect to take advantage *ſometimes* (of what I am ſure the Painter ought always to have

* Mr. Hodges.

have his Eyes open to) I mean the uſe of accidents, and to follow when they lead, and to improve them, rather than always to truſt to a plan. It often happens that additions have been made to houſes, at various times, for uſe or pleaſure. As ſuch buildings depart from regularity, they now and then acquire ſomething of ſcenery by this accident, which I ſhould think might not unſucceſsfully be adopted by an Architect, in an original plan, if it does not too much interfere with convenience. Variety and intricacy is a beauty and excellence in every other of the Arts which addreſs the imagination, and why not in Architecture?

The forms and turnings of the ſtreets of London, and other old Towns, are produced by accident, without any original plan or deſign, but they are not always the leſs pleaſant to the walker, or ſpectator, on that account. On the contrary, if the City had been built on the regular plan of Sir Chriſtopher Wren, the effect might have been, as we know it is in ſome new parts of the Town, rather unpleaſing: the uniformity might have produced wearineſs, and a ſlight degree of diſguſt.

I can

I can pretend to no ſkill in the detail of Architecture. I judge now of the Art, merely as a Painter. When I ſpeak of Vanbrugh, I mean to ſpeak of him in the language of our Art. To ſpeak then of Vanbrugh in the language of a Painter, he had originality of invention, he underſtood light and ſhadow, and had great ſkill in compoſition. To ſupport his principal object, he produced his ſecond and third groups or maſſes, He perfectly underſtood in *his* Art what is the moſt difficult in ours; the conduct of the Back-ground, by which the deſign and invention is ſet off to the greateſt advantage. What the back-ground is, in Painting, in Architecture is the real ground on which the building is erected; and no Architect took greater care, that his work ſhould not appear crude and hard. That is, it did not abruptly ſtart out of the ground without expectation or preparation.

This is a Tribute, which a Painter owes to an Architect who compoſed like a Painter; and was defrauded of the due reward of his merit, by the Wits of his time, who did not underſtand the principles of Compoſition in Poetry better than he; and who knew little, or nothing, of what he underſtood perfectly, the general ruling principles of Architecture and Painting.

His

His fate was that of the great Perrault; both were the objects of the petulent ſarcaſms of factious men of Letters; and both have left ſome of the faireſt ornaments, which to this day decorate their ſeveral countries; the façade of the Louvre, Blenheim, and Caſtle Howard.

Upon the whole, it ſeems to me, that the object and intention of all the Arts, is to ſupply the natural imperfection of things, and often to gratify the mind by realiſing, and embodying, what never exiſted but in the imagination.

It is allowed on all hands, that facts, and events, however they may bind the Hiſtorian, have no dominion over the Poet or the Painter. With us, Hiſtory is made to bend and conform to this great Idea of Art. And why? Becauſe theſe Arts, in their higheſt province, are not addreſſed to the groſs ſenſes, but to the deſires of the mind, to that ſpark of divinity which we have within, impatient of being circumſcribed and pent up by the world which is about us.

JUST ſo much as our Art has of this, juſt ſo much of dignity, I had almoſt ſaid of divinity, it exhibits; and thoſe of our Artiſts who poſſeſſed this mark of diſtinction in the higheſt degree, acquired from thence the glorious appellation of Divine.

THE END.

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